United Nations A/RES/58/154

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 February 2004

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 112

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/58/503)*]

58/154. Follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/113 of 20 December 1993, 49/173 of 23 December 1994, 50/151 of 21 December 1995, 51/70 of 12 December 1996, 52/102 of 12 December 1997, 53/123 of 9 December 1998 and, in particular, resolutions 54/144 of 17 December 1999 and 56/134 of 19 December 2001,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,[1]

Having considered the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees,[2]

Reaffirming the importance and continuing validity of the Programme of Action, adopted in 1996 by the Regional Conference to Address the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States,[3] as a basic guiding tool for future activities,

Recognizing the ongoing acuteness of the migration and displacement problems in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the necessity to follow up the Conference,

Recalling the decision of the Steering Group of the Conference at its fifth meeting to continue activities in the process entitled "Follow-up to the 1996 Geneva Conference on the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Migration and Asylum Issues" for a period of five years,

Recalling also the Work Plan for the Thematic Issues, prepared jointly by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International

[1] A/58/281.

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 12* (A/58/12).

[3] A/51/341 and Corr.1, appendix.

Organization for Migration, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe, in accordance with the recommendations adopted by the Steering Group at its fifth meeting,

Welcoming the convening, in Moscow from 20 to 23 November 2001, of the second meeting of experts within the framework of the Work Plan for the Thematic Issues, on the topic of asylum system development and treatment of asylum-seekers, as well as international efforts aimed at improving migration regulation and border management, with due regard for refugee protection matters, and encouraging all lead agencies to continue to implement the Work Plan,

Welcoming also the subregional initiatives within the framework of transboundary cooperation and the convening, in Kolmården, Sweden, in September 2002, of the senior-level review meeting,

Reaffirming the view of the Conference that the primary responsibility for tackling population displacement problems lies with the affected countries themselves and that these issues are to be regarded as national priorities, while at the same time recognizing the need for enhancing international support for the national efforts of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States aimed at the effective implementation of such responsibilities within the framework of the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference,

Noting with satisfaction the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in developing strategies and practical tools for more effective capacity-building in countries of origin and enhancing programmes to address the needs of various categories of concern to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Taking note of the positive results emanating from the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Convinced of the necessity of further strengthening practical measures and of continuing to maintain the regional approach for the achievement of effective implementation of the Programme of Action,

Noting with concern the decision to postpone the high-level review meeting concerning the implementation of the decisions of the Conference,

Recalling that the protection and promotion of human rights and the strengthening of democratic institutions are essential to prevent mass population displacement,

Mindful that adherence to the principles and the recommendations contained in the Programme of Action should be facilitated and that they can be ensured only through cooperation and coordinated activities undertaken in this respect by all interested States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other actors,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;[2]

2. *Calls upon* the Governments of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to strengthen their efforts and mutual cooperation relating to the follow-up to the Regional Conference to Address

the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Other Forms of Involuntary Displacement and Returnees in the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relevant Neighbouring States, and welcomes the positive results achieved by them in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference;[3]

3. *Invites* all States that have not yet done so to accede to and implement fully the 1951 Convention[4] and the 1967 Protocol[5] relating to the Status of Refugees;

4. *Calls upon* States and interested international organizations, in a spirit of solidarity and burden-sharing, to provide appropriate forms and levels of support for activities undertaken in follow-up to the Programme of Action;

5. *Invites* international financial and other institutions to contribute to the financing of projects and programmes within the framework of such follow-up activities;

6. *Invites* the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States to intensify bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation in maintaining the balance of commitments and interests in such activities;

7. *Calls upon* the Governments of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States to continue to strengthen their commitment to the principles underpinning the Programme of Action, in particular principles of human rights and refugee protection, and to lend high-level political support to ensure the implementation of activities undertaken in follow-up to the Programme of Action;

8. *Invites* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration to enhance their mutual relationship with other key international actors, such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission and human rights, development and financial institutions, in order better to address the wide-ranging and complex issues in activities undertaken in follow-up to the Programme of Action;

9. *Welcomes* the progress made in building civil society, in particular through the development of the non-governmental sector and the development of cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the Governments of a number of countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and notes in this regard the relationship between adherence to the principles of the Programme of Action and success in promoting civil society, especially in the field of human rights;

10. *Encourages* the involvement of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the follow-up to the Conference, and invites them to demonstrate stronger support for the process of multinational constructive dialogue among a wide range of countries concerned;

11. *Emphasizes* the necessity of undertaking follow-up activities to the Programme of Action in relation to ensuring respect for human rights as an important factor in the management of migration flows, the consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and stability;

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[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[5] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

12. *Recognizes* the importance of taking measures, on the basis of strict adherence to all of the principles of international law, including humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, to prevent situations that lead to new flows of refugees, displaced persons and other forms of involuntary displacement;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of activities undertaken in follow-up to the Programme of Action;

14. *Decides* to continue its consideration of the question at its sixtieth session.

77th plenary meeting
22 December 2003